

Alabama Board of Physical Therapy Newsletter

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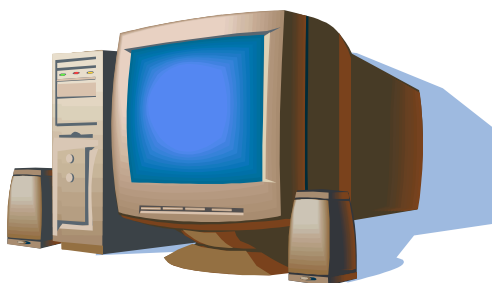
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2009 ONLINE RENEWAL IS HERE!

The online renewal process will be available online from August 1, 2009, through November 1, 2009. **Licenses will expire at midnight on September 30, 2009.** BUT, if you're not treating patients, there is a **"grace" period** during which you can still renew October 1 through November 1 without having to pay a "late fee". The key words are: **IF YOU'RE NOT TREATING PATIENTS.** We cannot over-stress the fact that if you treat a patient after your license has expired, prior to getting it renewed, you will have a HUGE fine to pay, and your name will be listed on the website, and it will be reported to HIPDB. The Board is serious about this issue of licensees treating patients with an expired license. The fine can be as much as \$1,000 per patient treated with an expired license. **And your employer will be notified.**

Just a bit of housekeeping so you'll know what you need to do. You should have received a post card through the mail telling you the WHO, WHAT, WHY, WHEN, and WHERE regarding your license renewal. Just in case you did not receive your notice due to not notifying the Board Office of an address change, I'll briefly tell you what you need. **You will need a credit card, your license #** beginning with PTH (physical therapist) or PTA (physical therapist assistant), **the last 4 digits of your Social Security Number**, and **a copy of your pre-approved continuing education.** There is a 10% audit with the online procedure. **If you are audited**, you will be notified at the end of your online process, which tells you that you have 10 working days to fax or mail in proof of your CE that you have posted on the renewal form. **Please do not send in the original certificate;** you need to keep that for future reference; we only need a copy. **If audited, we will not send you the renewed license until we receive proof of your continuing education.**

Check your license card for the date of your expiration. It may be that you will not need to renew for 2009. If you were licensed from January 1, 2009, to date, your license will not expire until 2010. If you were licensed by exam, you will not be required to have continuing education for your first renewal.

We wish you every success this year in your renewal process. Please give the office feedback; we're not opposed to making changes that will improve the process.

CHANGES ON THE HORIZON FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION

Section 700-x-2.09 (3) of the Alabama Administrative Code states that continuing education is required for license renewal. Successful completion is also a prerequisite for CE and documentation must be presented to the Board upon request. Occasionally, change becomes necessary to improve the skill and knowledge of licensees.

There have been numerous concerns and questions about continuing education requirements for licensure. In response to this concern, the Board has discussed this topic at length. Currently, the Board is in the process of revamping the requirements.

The Board's purpose is to protect the welfare and well-being of the public. There appears to be discussion among licensees and others about continuing competence vs. continuing education. Concern about what constitutes in-service or continuing education has also been presented to the Board. Additionally, the very purpose behind the mandate for continuing education is being addressed. These matters will all be considered during this process.

Once the Board has established criteria and requirements for continuing education, information will be posted on the web-site, and licensees will be notified.



MODEL PRACTICE ACT TASK FORCE

The Alabama Chapter's Model Practice Act (MPA) Task Force has continued to meet regularly since the last Newsletter was published. The Task Force members include Buddy McCormick (Chair), Andy McGill, David Morris, Patrice Murphy, Ellen Strunk, and Jay Segal. The meetings have been held by conference call, as well as, face to face. To reiterate, the Task Force has adopted the following:

Description: The Model Practice Act Task Force will be made up of physical therapy practitioners who represent a variety of stakeholders (ALBPT, Alabama Chapter Leadership, Licensees) and geographic locations. The purpose of the Task Force will be to advance physical therapy practice and delivery in Alabama by updating the Alabama Physical Therapy Practice Act and Administrative Code to reflect contemporary standards and practices that result in high quality services for physical therapy consumers.

Objective: To provide recommendations concerning the Alabama Physical Therapy Practice Act and Administrative Code language that would:

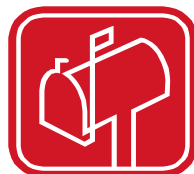
Update the practice of physical therapy in Alabama.

Be accepted in the current political climate within Alabama.

I am pleased to report that the Task Force has completed its review of the Alabama Practice Act Statutes and integrated this with the Model Practice Act. Prior to providing a final report, we decided to do two presentations to obtain feedback, including recommendations. We had a meeting with the Chapter Counsel and some invited guests, which followed a specific format. The purpose for using this protocol was to ensure that we could address the entire document in a manner that was easy to follow and would provide a rationale for our decisions. The Task Force took the information we received from this meeting and reviewed it. Where appropriate, the concerns expressed were addressed and the recommendations given were included in this document.

The Task Force is now planning to meet with the Alabama Board of Physical Therapy to get further feedback and recommendations, prior to making our final report. It is our sincere hope that this meeting will not only provide us with good information, but will also be informative to the Board. Once their comments have been reviewed, the Task Force will publish its final recommendations. We believe in completing this task, we will have fulfilled our purpose and achieved the objectives we established. It has been an arduous task but certainly worth the many hours spent. I would like to thank the Task Force members for their time, fortitude, and patience and say to the Physical Therapy Licensing Board that it has been a privilege to represent them on the Task Force. - Jay Segal, PT

The Board conducted a meeting on April 25, 2009, in Panama City, Florida, in conjunction with the ALPT Association's Spring meeting, inviting all licensees to attend, nominate and vote for five (5) physical therapists to certify to the Governor for his appointment of one (1) physical therapist in October 2009. Qualifications for nominees are: (1) Be a resident and citizen of this state; and (2) Have practiced physical therapy, or acted as a physical therapist, within the State of Alabama for the three years preceding his or her appointment. According to the CODE OF ALABAMA 1975 Section 34-24-192 (a), the membership of the board shall be inclusive and reflect the racial, gender, geographic, urban/rural, and economic diversity of the state. Whenever possible, no two members of the board shall be residents of the same congressional district. The Physical Therapist who rotates off this year after serving two 5-year terms is Sonja Enfinger, who represents District 5. The five physical therapists who have been nominated this year are: Andrea Batt, (District 5), Ellen Strunk (District 6), Charlina Washington (District 2), Wiley Christian (District 1), and Eric Dekle (District 1). The districts that will be vacant are Districts 4 and 5. The appointment is strictly the Governor's choice. All the nominees are qualified and have a desire to serve on the licensure board. May the best one be appointed!



**PLEASE NOTIFY THE BOARD
IF YOU HAVE AN ADDRESS CHANGE
THE STATE DOES NOT FORWARD MAIL**

TWO PROPOSED RULE CHANGES:
ONE RULE CHANGE READY TO SUBMIT;
ONE RULE CHANGE IN PROGRESS

In an attempt to comply with the charge to the Alabama Board of Physical Therapy, which is to protect the public, a rule change regarding the conduct of physical therapy licensees was proposed and voted on at the July Board meeting. The change passed with a unanimous vote. This rule change in its original language is shown below, as it appears in the Administrative Code.

700-X-3-.02 Unbecoming Conduct/Conduct Detrimental To The Best Interest Of The Public Prohibited.

(2) **Certain Conduct Specifically Prohibited.** While the statements of conduct apply universally, the application or interpretations are usually based on specific individual circumstances. The determination as to what constitutes unbecoming conduct shall be solely within the judgment of the Board of Physical Therapy. The Board finds that and declares that unbecoming conduct shall include, but not be limited to, the following, either singularly, in part, or in combination:

- (c) Willfully harassing, abusing, or intimidating a patient, either physically or verbally.

The rule change affects 700-X-3-.02 (c) and the changes read as follows:

- (c) Willfully harassing, abusing, or intimidating a patient, student, volunteer or any individual, either physically or verbally.

It will go through the legislative process and become effective 70 days after submission to the Legislative Reference Service.



There is concern among members of the Board that it may be common practice in this state to over utilize physical therapy aides and support personnel in the deliverance of PT services. The second rule change being discussed is in the process of revision, and deals with this issue.

The Board is diligently attempting to formulate a “list” of acceptable tasks that can be performed by unlicensed physical therapy aides. This will be used to guide physical therapists and physical therapist assistants in assigning duties to unlicensed support personnel.

As this is a work in progress, the Board would like to invite licensees to submit written comments/suggestions via USPS or email (PLEASE NO PHONE CALLS) regarding this issue. We will keep you abreast of the progress with this pressing issue being addressed by the Board.

Push the “**HOT TOPICS**” button on the homepage and see what “HOT” items are up for discussion on the Board Meeting Agenda.

